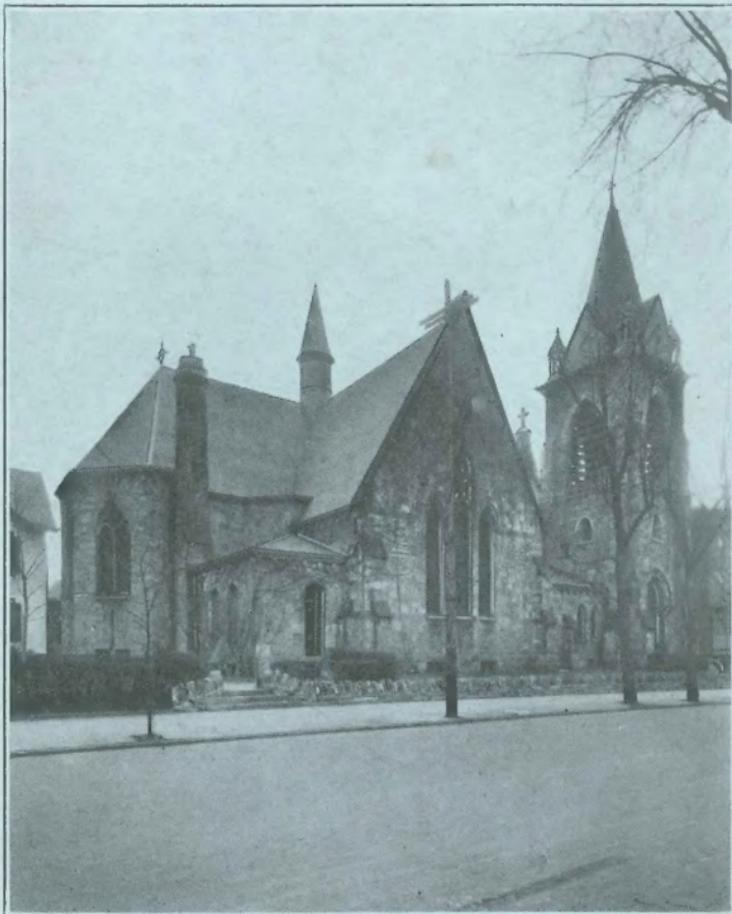


Saint Mary's Church

Hamilton Village



3916 Locust Street
Philadelphia 4, Pennsylvania

SAINT MARY'S CHURCH
HAMILTON VILLAGE

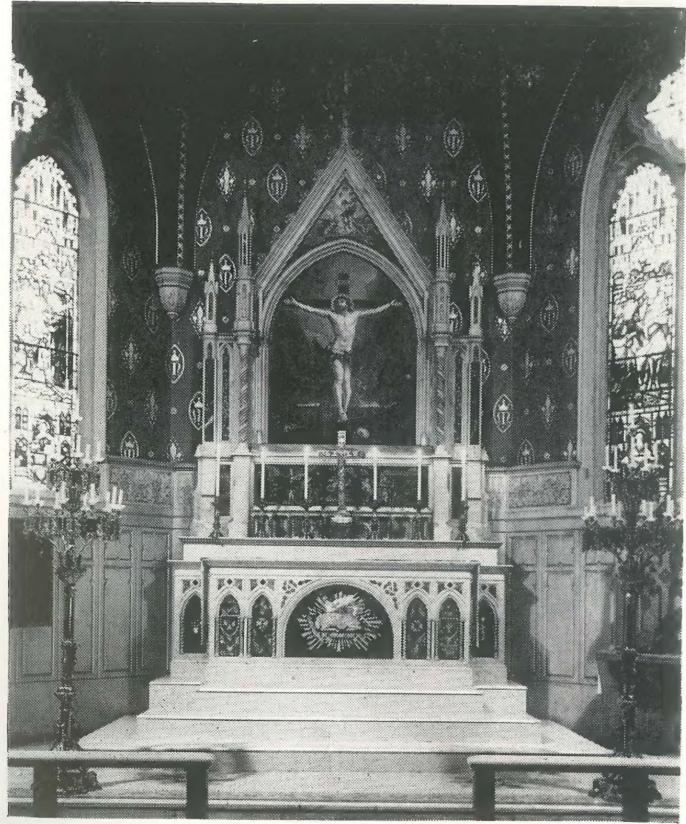


3916 LOCUST STREET
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SEPTEMBER, 1946



THE HIGH ALTAR

THE HIGH ALTAR

The first glance within Saint Mary's shows plainly that the very center of all the Parish is (and has been, and always will be) the High Altar.

The only one of its kind in this country, it would undoubtedly be listed in Baedeker guide books, if it were in some town or city of Europe.

Newcomers assume that the Altar and reredos are at least partially of painted surfaces; indeed, many long-time members of the Parish find it difficult to believe the fact that *there is no paint on the entire Altar and reredos.*

In the apex is a representation of the Ascension; the main panel is of the Crucifixion (after Guido Reni); the long panel above the retable is the Nativity, including the Adoration of the Shepherds on the left and the Visit of the Magi on the right. These three panels, as well as all other decoration of the Altar and reredos, are entirely of mosaic of the finest workmanship.

Sculpture; mosaic; marble work; panels of Agnus Dei, Alpha and Omega, symbols of the Eucharist and of the Passion—all were executed in Rome by masters of their separate arts. The various stones came from Egypt, Syria, Palestine, and the East.

In 1876, the Altar was on display in the Italian Art section of the Centennial Exposition, here in Philadelphia. It had been planned and executed at the direction of the Wetherill family, and was with their permission so displayed before its installation at Saint Mary's in its present location. The ends of the Altar bear memorial inscriptions honoring the donors.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST AT SAINT MARY'S

Besides the High Altar, you will be interested to know of, and perhaps to see, such items as these:

There is an Altar Missal, folio size, with handsome hand-illuminated pages for each of the greater Festivals of the Christian Year, all bound in red leather with sterling silver decorations.

On the wall of All Saints' Chapel is a Madonna from about the Sixteenth Century.

In the North Sacristy is a petit-point and sequin Madonna, French hand-work of the Seventeenth Century.

Memorial inscriptions and tablets are to be found on many of the furnishings of the Church.

You may care also to wander through the Parish House, connected with the West end of the Church by a memorial Cloister; the Rectory stands just East of the Church proper. More information about both of these buildings is mentioned elsewhere in this booklet.

A BIT OF THE HISTORY OF SAINT MARY'S

For several years before 1817, occasional services were held in a village school house of the countryside west of the Schuylkill River. Later, services were conducted at a home at what is now Thirty-Ninth and Chestnut Streets. In 1817 it was learned that William Hamilton, Esq. had left some land for the erection of an Episcopal Church; it is upon this property that Saint Mary's now stands. The section of the countryside was known as Hamilton (or Hamiltonville), and the Parish retains the name in its official title, Saint Mary's Church, Hamilton Village.

By 1824, about forty members had been connected with the work, and some \$2,000 raised for a building. In that year Bishop White, then in his seventy-eighth year, laid the cornerstone. (This stone now lies in the pavement at the tower entrance to the Church.) Three years later, in 1827, the Church was consecrated and the Parish admitted into union with the Convention of the Diocese. Of the one hundred sixty-odd Parishes in Philadelphia County, fewer than a dozen are older than Saint Mary's, and no other now existing was established in West Philadelphia until nearly a score of years after 1827.

Since the work of the Parish was in the country, it was largely a summer congregation until 1837, when the first Rector was elected. The Parish advanced slowly but steadily, and in 1844 the Rev. Thomas C. Yarnall became Rector. He remained a full fifty-four years as Rector, until 1898. In 1894, at his Golden Jubilee, many of the

furnishings now in use were presented to the Parish. After his retirement, Dr. Yarnall was Rector Emeritus until his death in 1911, at the age of ninety-six. To his devoted work is due in large measure the firm establishment of the Parish as it is today.

In 1846 the Church was enlarged; in 1850 the Rectory was built, one room being used for the Church School; in 1874 a separate building was erected for the Church School; in 1883 this was enlarged to provide a Parish House; a fire in 1896 so damaged this building that another (the present one) was erected.

The Parish had grown so much under Dr. Yarnall that a larger Church building was urgently needed. Largely because of what were called "Puseyite" sympathies at Saint Mary's, and as a result of the strong party feeling from the Oxford Revival in England, a number of families withdrew in 1855 and established a nearby Parish. Despite this loss of support, in 1871 plans were made for a new building. The cornerstone was laid in 1872, and the present Church consecrated in 1890; at that same time the High Altar was installed.

In 1937 Saint Philip's Church, West Philadelphia, merged with Saint Mary's. The Altar and other furnishings were transferred to the North Transept of Saint Mary's, and Saint Philip's Chapel established there. In the South Transept is All Saints' Chapel, intended eventually as a mortuary chapel. Under the Altar in All Saints' Chapel stands the original wooden Table from the first Saint Mary's building; over the West door of the Nave is the blue Cross from the earlier Saint Mary's Church.

THE PRESENT DAY AT SAINT MARY'S

Located in an area which was originally suburban, Saint Mary's now finds itself in the very midst of a great city. We are literally surrounded by the schools and fraternity houses of the University of Pennsylvania. While much of West Philadelphia is changing rapidly, the vicinity of the University remains largely static, except for the introduction of more and more apartment buildings.

Whereas some of the Parishes in West Philadelphia face extinction because of changed and changing populations (several have been forced to close their doors), Saint Mary's has at the present a double responsibility—that toward the thousands who live within our area, and that toward the hundreds of University people who look to us for Christian leadership.

With a view to presenting that leadership, we of Saint Mary's have recently been making steady improvements in our physical equipment: Church, Parish House, and Rectory.

During the past year or so, we have had a healthy and encouraging increase in numbers, and a most gratifying response to our work among young people of University age. We have also reorganized our work among the women of the Parish, and begun other groups for various ages and interests.

We are witnessing firmly to the power of Christ and His Church, through the work of Saint Mary's Church, Hamilton Village—but always with *His* will above ours in all things.

PRESENT ORGANIZATIONS CARRYING ON THE WORK OF THE PARISH

The Vestry, with elections at Eastertide each year.

The Men's Club, for all men of the Parish.

The Women of Saint Mary's, comprising all the work of the Woman's Auxiliary, both in the Parish and elsewhere; for all women of the Parish.

The Altar Guild, for women.

The Order of Saint Vincent, for Acolytes and Servers.

The Church School, with classes for all ages.

The Choir, including professional and volunteer voices.

The Sunday Night Group, for older young people of the Parish and University.

The 'Teen Age Group, for our young people and their friends.

The Boy Scouts, Troop 96, Boy Scouts of America, sponsored by our Parish and meeting in our Parish House.

Further information about any of these activities may be had by addressing the Parish Office.

THE FUTURE AT SAINT MARY'S

With all of our equipment for doing the work of the Church—Church, Parish House, Rectory, other assets, loyal members—we still have a destiny to fulfill. We cannot rest content with the past alone.

What our future shall be depends upon every one who is a member or a friend of Saint Mary's.

What Saint Mary's does tomorrow depends upon what we do today!

To meet our coming responsibilities toward Parish people and University people, we need:

- a. To maintain and improve our physical property;
- b. To provide the organizations which will best give to our people a vision of the Church as it *can* be;
- c. To make of this Parish an ever-increasing source of the power of Christ in the community;
- d. To be satisfied with nothing less than the best, since this is God's work;
- e. Always and in all ways to present to those about us the great God and Father of us all, Who sent His Son into the world for one chief purpose: to save sinners.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Historical material for this booklet was chiefly supplied by Mr. William I. Rutter, Jr., a member of Saint Mary's Parish, who is also an active officer of The Church Historical Society, an official agency of the General Convention.

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The general editor has been the Rector, The Rev. William X Smith.



Additional copies of this booklet
may be obtained by addressing

Saint Mary's Parish House,
3916 Locust Street,
Philadelphia 4, Pennsylvania.